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**De-Qualification and De-Emancipation  
among Recently Arrived Highly Skilled  
Immigrant Women in Switzerland**

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# **De-Qualification and De-Emancipation among Recently Arrived Highly Skilled Immigrant Women in Switzerland**

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## Abstract

Immigrants face numerous obstacles to integrating themselves into the Swiss labor market. One issue is the underutilization of skills, qualifications, and knowledge, which results in a brain waste for the migrants as well as for the Swiss society. This study examines the determinants of de-qualification and de-emancipation among the recently arrived highly skilled immigrant women in Switzerland. Using data from the Migration-Mobility Survey carried out in 2016 by the nccr – on the move, bivariate and multivariate statistical analyses are conducted with multinomial models. Being overeducated is used to determine the de-qualification process, and being excluded from the labor market to grasp the de-emancipation phenomenon. The main variables tested are the reason to migrate with the timeline of the partner's migration, births of children with the timeline of migration and the region of origin. Recently arrived highly skilled immigrant women who arrived for family reasons, who have children and who are from emerging countries are significantly more likely to be excluded from the labor market. Furthermore, they have more risk of being overeducated if they come from Latin America and non-frontier countries of Europe. The findings indicate that de-qualification is mostly explained by the region of origin, whereas de-emancipation results, on the one hand, from the family situation of women and their status as tied migrants and, on the other hand, from discrimination towards the origin. There is an urgent need to better understand the factors behind the deficit in labor force integration among immigrants and particularly women immigrants as well as to enhance the situation of those groups. Indeed, in Switzerland, discrimination towards migratory background is strengthened by being a woman and being from a specific country of origin. Therefore, the accretion of disadvantages leads to higher risks of underexploited capacities and knowledge.

## Keywords

Highly Skilled Migrants, Skills Mismatch, De-qualification, Labor Market, Gender Gap

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## **Contents**

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Literature Review</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Overeducation and De-Emancipation among Highly Skilled Immigrant Populations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Family Migration</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Obstacles to a Successful Professional Integration</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Data and Methods</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Data</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Descriptive Results</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Multivariate Analyses</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>19</b>
	<b>Annexe</b>	<b>21</b>
	<b>References</b>	<b>23</b>

# 1 Introduction

Immigrants face numerous challenges in integrating into the labor market as well as into society when arriving in host countries. Not only can they face difficulties in finding a professional occupation but also such occupation may not suit their educational level, skills or knowledge. According to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, among the tertiary educated population in Switzerland, close to one immigrant in five (18.5%) of the first generation was skilled or educated beyond what is necessary for their occupational position (the so-called “overeducation”) in 2016 (SFSO 2017b). Furthermore, gender specificities in terms of migration and roles generate a gender gap concerning this issue: women are more frequently overeducated than men (SFSO 2017b, Riaño et al. 2015)<sup>1</sup>. Recently arrived immigrants are particularly concerned with this issue because, amongst others, time and adaptation are needed to enable successful professional integration (Pecoraro 2011, Pecoraro and Wanner 2019). Instead of only considering the “brain drain” phenomenon, which constitutes a damage for the country of origin, these educational and skill mismatches result in a “brain waste” (Sumption 2013, Riaño 2012), in other words, a loss for both the immigrants and the entire society.

This paper aims to understand the extent to which the reason to migrate in Switzerland, family formation and the region of origin impact the professional integration and skill underutilization among recently arrived highly skilled immigrant women. This study focuses then on skill underutilization by examining women’s migratory, professional and family trajectories. The de-qualification and de-emancipation processes are depicted through two different variables, each of which grasps a different aspect of skill underexploitation encountered by immigrant women in Switzerland.

The next section of this paper introduces the topic through a literature review, which aims to describe the phenomena with an emphasis on family as the reason to migrate and on the different obstacles to successful professional integration. The third section provides some explications concerning the data source, the population under study and the methods used in this research. The results are displayed in section 4 and commented on in section 5.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Overeducation and De-Emancipation among Highly Skilled Immigrant Populations

Overeducation occurs when a person is working in an occupation that requires a level of education lower than his/hers. A wider term usually used is overqualification: “a person’s qualifications for the job performed is a broad term encompassing both his/her formal education and any relevant informal education plus on-the-job-training” (Atukeren and Wirz 2005:1). The process of deskilling refers to the underutilization of skills due to the mismatch between the attained educational degree and the required level of education to perform a specific activity (i.e. job-education mismatch, see for instance Man 2004, Raghuram and Kofman 2004). Recently arrived immigrants are particularly

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<sup>1</sup> See Riaño et al. (2014) for a deeper discussion on the differences of employment between highly skilled women and men for migrant as well as non-migrant populations in Switzerland.

concerned with this process (Pecoraro 2011). Furthermore, the population that holds a tertiary educational level has a greater risk of being overeducated (Pecoraro and Wanner 2019).

Differences between immigrants and natives are observable when considering the highest level of education obtained. According to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, which published results for the year 2016, the education level distribution among migrants (1<sup>st</sup> generation) is equally distributed between the three main levels, with approximately 36% who attained a tertiary education, 36% who attained a secondary II level and 29% who stopped their formation after compulsory school. Among the Swiss population (i.e., the population who does not derive from migration), in sequence, the main level of education is the median level (Secondary II, 53%), second is the tertiary (32%) and finally is the obligatory school level (15%). Therefore, in Switzerland, the immigrant population has a higher share of tertiary-level education in comparison with the Swiss population. Men have a higher level of education than women, irrespective of the migratory status. Among the natives, 40% of men hold a tertiary degree compared to less than 25% for women. The gender gap is wider in the Swiss population than in the migrant population (1<sup>st</sup> generation), where 37.5% of men and 34% of women are highly educated (SFSO 2017a).

According to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, in 2016, the share of tertiary educated immigrants affected by overeducation was higher than among natives (18.5% versus 11%). Furthermore, women are more inclined to apply for an occupation for which they are overeducated compared to men (24% versus 14% among immigrants, 12% versus 10% among natives, SFSO 2017b, see also Chicha and Deraedt 2009, Riaño and Baghdadi 2007, Pecoraro 2005, Pecoraro 2006, Pecoraro and Wanner 2019). Therefore, a migrant woman suffers from double discrimination, first as a migrant and second as a woman, to find a job that suits her qualifications. A triple disadvantage is even faced by immigrant women from specific ethnicities coming from Africa and Asia (Raijman and Semyonov 1997).

According to Riaño (2011), highly skilled immigrant women can encounter three situations of professional integration: (1) Employment according to skill level, (2) Employment below skill level, and (3) Not in the labor market (homemakers, students or unemployed)<sup>2</sup>. The first and successful situation refers to women employed in occupations that correspond to their skills and education. The second situation refers to women who work in occupations not related to their skills. The third situation occurs when women who might have been professionally active before moving to Switzerland become economically dependent on their partners after the migration. In this case, immigration leads to a process of de-emancipation that reduces women to the role of household keepers (Riaño 2003). De-emancipation is an ultimate form of overeducation and occurs when a person encounters a loss in his/her (professional) emancipation. Based on Laclau's (1996) findings, Verduijn and al. (2014) define emancipation as "the eradication of oppression in all of its forms" (Verduijn and al. 2014:100). In our case, the oppression is represented as the discriminative practices that impede the entrance into the host labor market towards migrants on one hand and women on the other hand. Indeed, compared to their former situation in their country of origin, women are re-oriented after their migration from the public towards the private sphere by undertaking an intensification of domestic responsibilities (Meares 2010). Thus, the last two situations displayed in Riaño's study account for skill underutilization per se. Indeed, career

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<sup>2</sup> In Riaño et al. (2014), types of access to the labor market are defined as following (1) Paid work according to educational level, (2) Paid work below educational level, and (3) No paid work (homemakers or unemployed).

damage that migrants (and particularly women) face includes not only a shift downwards from career paths but also unemployment. Moreover, underemployment, the fact of working less than wanted (e.g., part-time), or working on a temporary basis might also be the sign of professional deterioration (Meares 2010). Therefore, Riaño's results constitute the basis of this paper. The process of de-qualification is analyzed with overeducation, whereas the process of de-emancipation is examined by excluding the labor market despite working before migration and being highly educated. This analysis coincides with different dimensions and forms of skill and knowledge underexploitation.

## 2.2 Family Migration

Defining a unique typology of family-related migration is complex because of its multiple possible forms and the ongoing changing nature of migratory and family patterns. Kofman (2004) puts three categories forward in an attempt to encompass the concept of family migration in the European Union context. First, the process of bringing immediate family members (spouses, children or other permitted members) by the "primary" migrant holds for family reunification. A rather rough distinction exists in the literature between the "primary" applicant, who lodges the application to migrate, presupposed the "independent male migrant" or "breadwinner", and the "secondary" applicant, often considered the "dependent female migrant", who migrates thanks to her/his relationship with the "primary" applicant. It has been proven that a large majority of "primary" skilled applicants are indeed men (Boucher 2007). The second category, family formation or marriage migration, implies marriages of permanent residents or citizens with a partner living abroad but also marriages of second-generation children of migrant origin (citizens or non-citizens) who bring in their spouse from a diasporic place or their parents' country of origin. This concept of family formation can also include partnership as a reason to immigrate. The third group refers to family migration where the entire family migrates at the same time (Kofman 2004).

Migrating for family reasons has an important impact on the professional situation of skilled immigrants in the host country, however, this topic has received little attention in migration studies (Kofman et al. 2012), in particular in the context of highly-skilled migration (Riaño 2011). Furthermore, only a few studies explicitly incorporate gender in migration research nowadays (Donato et al. 2017), particularly under a quantitative analysis (Curran et al. 2006). The "primary" applicant's career is strongly prioritized, as the "secondary" applicant, often a woman, has to make sacrifices not only in terms of work status but also occupational status (Chattopadhyay 1997). This gendered distribution in family-related migration may be referred to as the gender dichotomy in society in general, which tends to consider males as producers and females as reproducers (Kofman 2004). Moreover, having children plays an additional role in the economic integration of women in the labor market and in the risk of being overqualified (Pecoraro 2011, Riaño et al. 2015). Women are likely to restrict their career expansion and job search by working less, in occupations that are close to home or that may not suit their qualifications or even not working at all to avoid conflict with traditional familial roles (Raijman and Semyonov 1997, Semyonov and Lewin-Epstein 1991). Therefore, as Shauman and Noonan (2007) underline, family migration is significantly less likely to benefit married women's career than married men's. In particular, they show a decline in women's earnings, on the contrary to men who tend to earn more in case of family migration. There is, in fact, an unexplained wage penalty related to motherhood, which is larger among highly skilled women (Oesch et al. 2017, England et al. 2016).



## 2.3 Obstacles to a Successful Professional Integration

One of the barriers faced by immigrants to integrate the labor market is the lack of official recognition of their educational degrees (Riaño 2003, Riaño 2011). However, advances have been made in recent decades. Bilateral agreements enable better recognition of foreign degrees from the European Union (EU) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). This concerns approximately three-fourths of immigrants in Switzerland (D’Amato et al. 2019). Furthermore, the language barrier has a tremendous impact on the professional integration of immigrants, which is particularly the case in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, where the spoken language (Swiss German) is not only less accessible for immigrants but also differs from the written language. A third obstacle encountered is the discrimination faced when looking for a job according to the migratory background (Fibbi et al. 2014, Fibbi et al. 2006, Wood et al. 2009, Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004, Oreopoulos 2009) or the gender of the applicant (Woodhams et al. 2009, Neumark et al. 1996, Goldin and Rouse 1997). Another hurdle encountered particularly by (immigrant) women is the shortage of institutional and family support for childcare in Switzerland and the costs of existing childcare (Riaño 2003). An additional barrier for highly skilled immigrant women after their migration is the gendered type of skills. The majority of men work in occupations that require technical, scientific and managerial skills, whereas women work in fields such as teaching or medicine. However, international transferability is easier and demand is higher among the first set of skills (Ho 2006, Liversage 2009). Finally, contrary to a majority of highly skilled men, who migrate based on information released by their networks or who take part in an international intercompany transfer, women who migrate for family reasons have to rebuild their own professional network if they want to enter in the host labor market. This process can take several years and still not be achieved (Purkayastha 2005).

In summary, some of these barriers are faced by immigrants of both sexes, and others, specifically by women. Therefore, being an immigrant woman engenders a double disadvantage that can be further exacerbated by discrimination related to the origin. In Riaño’s (2003) study, most of the immigrant women interviewed were either overqualified or excluded from the Swiss labor market (see also Riaño 2011 and Riaño et al. 2014).

## 2.4 Hypotheses

Therefore, our hypotheses, based on the literature examined, are stated as follows:

1. *Moving as a “secondary” migrant, in other words, for family reasons, increases the probability of being overeducated (de-qualification) and excluded from the labor market (de-emancipation).* The lack of network and often the gendered type of skills do not enable “secondary” immigrant women to be adequately integrated into the host labor market. Furthermore, the timeline with partner’s migration has an impact on professional integration. Moving after the partner generates an additional barrier to find an adequate occupation.
2. *The concepts of de-qualification and de-emancipation are mainly explained by the traditional familial roles and the women’s childcare responsibility.* The balance between work and family obligations conducts women in occupations that do not correspond to their skills. This is particularly the case in Switzerland where institutional support for childcare is



limited and expensive. Moreover, the calendar of childbearing has an impact on professional integration. Women with children born after migration face additional difficulties to find an adequate occupation.

3. *The region or the country of origin has an impact on de-qualification and de-emancipation due to discrimination on the labor market faced by immigrants from specific origins.* This underlines the triple disadvantage immigrant women face when coming from southern countries.

In this paper, de-qualification is shown through the concept of overeducation, whereas de-emancipation is shown through the fact of being excluded from the labor market in the host country despite working before migration. The impact of the woman's position in the family on labor market outcomes will be studied after taking into account her family situation as well as her migratory history and origin.

### 3 Data and Methods

#### 3.1 Data

The data used are from a Survey carried out in 2016 in Switzerland on 5,973 immigrants by the nccr - on the move<sup>3</sup>, which addressed several topics: migratory trajectory, educational pathway, employment history, integration, citizenship intentions, family composition and satisfaction with life in Switzerland. Immigrants interviewed were between 24 and 64 years old at the time of the survey and were aged not less than 18 years old when they immigrated and arrived in Switzerland during the last 10 years (Steiner and Landös 2019). The survey was conducted using a mixed-mode approach (online questionnaire or telephone interviews) in six different languages: English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. Therefore, although the majority of immigrants are reached through these different languages, the sample surveyed is not fully representative of the overall immigrant population in Switzerland (see Steiner and Landös 2019 for a description of these data).

#### 3.2 Methods

The population studied in this paper is the immigrant women interviewed in the Migration-Mobility Survey who reported having a tertiary education, i.e., those who attained a university degree (bachelor's, master's, or PhD). Furthermore, only active women before the arrival in Switzerland (working in a full-time, part-time or several part-time basis) are considered. The status of professional activity before migration is then compared to the situation at the time of the survey. Immigrants who did not work before immigration (e.g., because studying, looking after home or family, disabled, retired or in another unemployment situation) are not considered in this analysis. Based on these different criteria, the sample analyzed holds 1,121 highly skilled immigrant women, of which 16.7% are working below their skill level (in other words overeducated) and 29.1% are excluded from the labor market (i.e., seeking a job, looking after home or family or in another non-employed situation).

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<sup>3</sup> <https://nccr-onthemove.ch/research/migration-mobility-survey/>

A model that grasps the contrasting aspects of skill underutilization is presented and tested in this paper. Three different states are considered. The first is successful professional integration into the Swiss labor market. This is the case when immigrant women find an occupation that suits their skills, competences, and knowledge. The second state corresponds to the situation of active immigrant women, who are stuck in a situation of overeducation. Overeducation is defined using the comparison of two questions. What type of education do you feel is most appropriate for your current job? What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed? Both questions used the following scale: (1) No formal educational qualification, (2) Compulsory education, (3) Higher secondary education not giving access to universities (or similar), (4) Vocational education and/or training, (5) High school-leaving certificate giving access to universities (or similar), (6) Advanced technical and professional training, (7) Bachelor's degree or equivalent, (8) Master's degree or equivalent, and (9) PhD or equivalent. However, since we study women holding a tertiary education level, for the second question, only those with (7) Bachelor's degree or equivalent, (8) Master's degree or equivalent, or (9) PhD or equivalent were considered. Therefore, the second state (overeducation) refers to a situation where the level of education required for the job is lower than the actual level of education. The third state refers to women who do not declare any job at the time of the survey and who are either declaring looking for a job or being a housekeeper.

This approach enables a rather objective measure of educational mismatch, although there is still an appreciation by the worker. Nevertheless, it does not consider experience and on-the-job training. Therefore, this variable represents overeducation (educational mismatch) in the sense that only the formal educational level is considered.

By considering as “unemployed” not only the tertiary educated women who are looking for a job at the time of the survey but also those who report being housekeeper despite working before their migration to Switzerland, we include women deciding not to work (by choice or because of the difficulty in entering the labor market). Therefore, we grasp the de-emancipation process as being highly educated, employed before migration and a homemaker in Switzerland at the time of the survey.

Several confounding variables were included in the model: first, the motive of migration, which impacts the professional integration of immigrant women. The following categories were distinguished: (1) Economic migration, (2) Family migration with arrival at the same time as partner, (3) Family migration with arrival after partner, (4) Family migration to join the partner who already lived in Switzerland when they met, and (5) Other reasons. A second variable is the presence of children and the calendar of childbearing with the following categories: (1) No children, (2) Children born before migration, (3) Children born after migration, and (4) Children born before and after migration or during migration. The third variable is the region of origin. Countries are regrouped into six different regions: (1) Countries bordering Switzerland (Austria, France, Germany, and Italy), (2) Other European countries, (3) North America (USA and Canada), (4) Western Africa, (5) Latin America, and (6) Asia (mostly from India). Other confounding variables are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Explanatory variables used in the multinomial model

<b>Sociodemographic Factors</b>	
Age	24-32 years old (ref) 33-41 years old 42 years old or more
Level of education	Bachelor's or equivalent (ref) Master's or equivalent PhD or equivalent
Region of residence in CH	Lemanic Region (ref) Mittelland North-West Switzerland Zürich East Switzerland Central Switzerland Ticino
<b>Specific Gender-Related Factors</b>	
Reason for migrating and timeline with partner's migration	Economic migration (ref) Family migration with arrival at the same time as partner's Family migration with arrival after partner's Family migration to join the partner who lives in Switzerland Other reason
Having children and timeline with migration	No children (ref) Children only before migrating Children only after migrating Children before and after migrating or during migration
Having a partner	No (ref) Yes
<b>Migration-Related Factors</b>	
Region of country of origin	Countries bordering Switzerland (ref) Other European countries Northern America Western Africa Latin America Asia
<b>Integration-Related Factors</b>	
Length of residency in CH	1 year or less (ref) Between 2 and 4 years 5 years or more
Speaking local language	Speak not (very) well/not at all (ref) Speak (somewhat) fluently
<b>Work-Related Factors</b>	
Length of work experience (overall)	0-5 years (ref) 6-10 years 11 years or more
Having a job offer before migration	No (ref) Yes

The final selection of the independent variables included in the model is based on their significance and explanatory weight as well as to minimize the collinearity between each other. For instance, having encountered discrimination being highly correlated with the region of country of origin, this variable was removed, even though it was surely an interesting explanatory variable.

The three states retained enable the determination of the processes of de-qualification and de-emancipation compared to the successful professional integration of immigrant women into the Swiss labor market. We use a multinomial logit regression model to identify the determinants of these three different states with the model as the following assumption:

$M_i^* = \alpha + X_i \beta + e_i$ , with  $i = 1, 2, \dots, N$ , where  $\alpha$  is a constant,  $x_i$  are the explanatory and control variables, and  $e$  corresponds to the unobservable effect. Therefore, the polytomous variable  $M$  represents the possibility of the realization of three different states:

$$M_i = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if no mismatch} \\ 2 & \text{if overeducated} \\ 3 & \text{if excluded from the labour market} \end{cases}$$

Multinomial logistic regression enables the determination of the probabilities for individual  $i$  to be in situation  $j$ :

$$\mathbb{P}(M_i = j | O_i, X_i) = \frac{\exp(O_i \alpha_j + X_i \beta_j)}{\sum_{h=1,2,3} \exp(O_i \alpha_h + X_i \beta_h)}$$

We use a logistic regression to determine the probability ( $p$ ) of being in one of the states presented in this paper, according to the different explanatory variables:

$$\text{logit}(p) = \ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \dots$$

where  $\beta_0$  is a constant,  $\beta_1 \dots \beta_n$  are the coefficients, and  $x_1 \dots x_n$  are the different explanatory variables. The exponential value of the coefficients corresponds to the odds ratios with the odds being  $e^{\text{logit}(p)} = \frac{p}{1-p}$ .

For all models, the levels of significance of the odds ratios are \*\*\* < 0.001, \*\* < 0.01, and \* < 0.05.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Descriptive Results

The bivariate results are presented first to describe the associations of the explanatory variables with the different states of professional integration. Then, the models will be discussed.

Table 2 shows the shares of highly skilled women, among those active before migration, which are either successfully integrated in the Swiss labor market, overeducated or excluded from the labor

market, according to the reason for migration. Logically, almost three-quarters (73%) of women who arrive in Switzerland for economic reasons show successful professional integration (no mismatch). In contrast, family migrants demonstrate lower proportions of labor force participation. More than half of women who arrive after their partner are unemployed, while 14% are overeducated. Furthermore, 42% of women who join their partner who already lives in Switzerland are unemployed, and 21.5% reported that their level of formal education exceeds the required education level for their job. Migrating at the same time as the partner limits overeducation (9.6%) but increases unemployment (59%). Therefore, this group of women shows the lowest share of successful integration in the Swiss labor market.

*Table 2: De-qualification and de-emancipation among highly skilled recently arrived immigrant women according to reason for migrating and timeline with partner's migration, weighted values*

<b>Reason for Migrating and Timeline with Partner's Migration</b>	<b>No Mismatch</b>	<b>Over-education</b>	<b>Labor Market Exclusion</b>
Economic migration	73.3%	17.0%	9.6%
Family migration with arrival at the same time as partner	31.2%	9.6%	59.2%
Family migration with arrival after partner	35.4%	14.3%	50.3%
Family migration to join the partner who lives in Switzerland	36.1%	21.5%	42.4%
Other reasons	52.7%	19.3%	28.0%

Source: nccr – on the move Migration-Mobility Survey. Sample size: 1,121

The presence of children is significantly associated with the (un)successful professional integration of immigrant women at the 1% level (Table 3). More than two-thirds of women without children are well integrated. This share decreases for women having children. Women with children born before the arrival in Switzerland tend to be more overeducated (18%) but less excluded from the job market (40%) than immigrant women with children born after migration (14% and 45%, respectively). This is also the case for women with children born both before and after the migration or during the year they migrate (10% and 53%, respectively). We can assume that children born after migration are younger and therefore require more care than children born before migration, which can conduct to a rather low level of labor market participation.

*Table 3: De-qualification and de-emancipation among highly skilled recently arrived immigrant women according to having children and timeline with migration, weighted values*

<b>Having Children and Timeline with Migration</b>	<b>No Mismatch</b>	<b>Over-education</b>	<b>Labor Market Exclusion</b>
No children	67.4%	17.7%	14.9%
Children only before migrating	41.8%	18.3%	39.9%
Children only after migrating	40.9%	14.0%	45.1%
Children before and after migrating or during the migration	36.2%	10.3%	53.4%

Source: nccr – on the move Migration-Mobility Survey. Sample size: 1,121

The region of origin is significantly associated at the 1% level with the women's professional outcomes (Table 4). Approximately 70% of immigrant women from countries bordering Switzerland are well integrated in the labor market (no mismatch). Eighteen percent of women are

overeducated, and 11% are excluded from the labor market for this region of origin although working before migrating. Other European and North American migrants show lower proportions in terms of successful professional integration. Approximately one-quarter (26%) of women are unemployed or homemakers and one-fifth (21%) are overeducated for the European region (except for countries bordering Switzerland). Concerning North American women, more than one-third (36%) are unemployed, and only 7% are overeducated.

Western African women are the least integrated on the labor market, with 23% of highly skilled women being overeducated, and more than half (55%) being unemployed. This group is followed by Latin American women with 24% overeducated and 39% of immigrant women excluded from the labor market. These results can be explained by the fact that those two groups of countries are characterized by a low proportion of migrants arriving with a work contract. They are also characterized by a high level of self-reported discrimination. Asian immigrant women (mostly from India) also show a high proportion of unemployment (52%). Nevertheless, immigrants from Asia encounter a rather low level of overeducation (9%).

*Table 4: De-qualification and de-emancipation among highly skilled recently arrived immigrant women according to region of origin, weighted values*

<b>Region of Country of Origin</b>	<b>No Mismatch</b>	<b>Over-education</b>	<b>Labor Market Exclusion</b>
Countries bordering Switzerland	70.4%	18.4%	11.2%
Other European countries	52.9%	21.4%	25.7%
North America	56.5%	7.1%	36.5%
Western Africa	22.7%	22.7%	54.5%
Latin America	36.8%	23.9%	39.3%
Asia	39.3%	8.9%	51.8%

Source: nccr – on the move Migration-Mobility Survey. Sample size: 1,121

## 4.2 Multivariate Analyses

Table 5 displays a multinomial model (or competing risk analysis) to identify the determinants of being overeducated (O) or excluded from the labor market (E) despite being highly educated and employed before migration in comparison to successful professional integration in the Swiss labor market. The reference category is, therefore, “no mismatch”, i.e., being successfully and adequately integrated in the labor market.

Before discussing the estimates associated with the reason for migrating, having children and the region of origin, we first comment on the results obtained for the control variables. The level of education has a significant impact on being excluded from the labor market, as women who hold a PhD degree or equivalent have less risk of being unemployed or homemakers in comparison with those holding a bachelor’s degree or equivalent. Surprisingly, speaking the local language and the length of residence in Switzerland do not have any significant impact on overeducation or being excluded from the labor market. Concerning the work-related factors, migrating to Switzerland with a job offer significantly decreases the probability of being excluded from the labor market for recently arrived highly skilled women in comparison with arriving in Switzerland without a work

contract. Furthermore, when this variable is removed (see Model 2 in Table 5), the reason for migrating becomes significant for all modalities for being excluded from the labor market. Both indicators are highly correlated. Finally, work experience does not have any significant influence on the professional integration of immigrant women.

### Impact of the Reason for Migrating

When considering both the reason for migration and the timeline with the partner's migration, only one significant result appears. Women who arrive in Switzerland after their partner are more likely unemployed or homemakers at the time of the survey compared to those who decide to move to Switzerland for professional reasons. This result confirms the results of the aforementioned previous studies that stated that the “secondary” applicant faces more difficulties entering the labor market compared to the “primary” applicant, whose career is strongly prioritized. In the case of professional integration, the tied immigrant<sup>4</sup> often has to make sacrifices not only in terms of work status but also occupational status (Chattopadhyay 1997).

When the variables referring to the work experience and the job offer before migration are removed (see Model 2 in Table 5), more significant results are observed. Immigrant women arriving in Switzerland for family reasons are then significantly more likely to be excluded from the Swiss labor market than women who migrate for professional reasons. Those who arrive for family reasons and after their partners are five times more likely to be excluded from the labor market compared to those who migrate for professional reasons. Women who choose to move for family reasons and arrive together with their partner or join their partner, who is already living in Switzerland, also present an increased risk of being in this type of skills underutilization compared to the group of reference. Therefore, our first hypothesis is only partially verified. Moving as a “secondary” migrant increases the probability of being excluded from the labor market (de-emancipation); however, no significant results are observed for overeducation (de-qualification). It is also verified that moving after the partner leads to a higher risk of de-emancipation.

### Children and Migration

Having children increases the risk of being excluded from the labor market for immigrant women compared with women without children (which are the group of reference in our model). The chronology of births also impacts professional integration. Women giving birth after migration observe eight times more risk of being unemployed or homemakers in comparison to childless women. This result may be explained by the arrival of a young child, which might cause women to drop out of the job market to care for the family. Women with children born before the migration are four times more likely to be excluded from the labor market than childless women. Finally, women with children born before and after migration, or at the same year as the migration, are still more likely to be excluded from the Swiss labor market than childless ones. Therefore, not only motherhood impacts the professional career of highly skilled immigrant women but also the place where the family grows up. According to studies on managerial positions and gender differences, society considers fathers to be stable and breadwinners, whereas the first responsibility of mothers is to take care of children. This creates profound barriers for women in terms of professional career

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<sup>4</sup> According to Cooke (2013:818), “A tied migrant is usually defined as an individual whose family migrated but who would not have chosen to move if single [...]”.



progression (Schein 2001, Windsor and Auyeung 2006), which seems to be confirmed here. In other words, mothers show interrupted work patterns, and women at childbearing age are often seen as a potential economic risk by employers (Windsor and Auyeung 2006). As it has been demonstrated that the presence of children positively impacts male advancement (Ragins and Sundstrom 1989), one can observe that children strengthen the differences and stereotypes of both genders in the professional sphere. The results obtained here can be exacerbated by the fact that because of the shortage and high costs of external childcare in Switzerland, women are professionally disadvantaged (Atukeren and Wirz 2005). To address this problem, women tend to occupy part-time positions. According to data published by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 74% of native women with children have access to this type of job versus only 49% for immigrant mothers. This finding is explained by the higher share of part-time occupations in the tertiary sector and particularly in the administration, where native women are more represented (SFSO 2017c, SFSO 2018). Finally, immigrant women's professional careers are particularly affected by the presence of children because they cannot access informal help from the family, which most likely lives abroad (Chattopadhyay 1997). Nonetheless, our second hypothesis is only partially verified. The presence of children increases the probability to quit the labor market (de-emancipation); however, it has no impact on being overeducated (de-qualification). As anticipated, when children are born after migration, the risk of de-emancipation increases.

### The Country of Origin, a Significant Factor of Professional Integration

The country or region of origin impacts professional integration. Western African, Latin American and Asian women demonstrate a risk of being excluded from the labor market multiplied by 6 (for the first group) and 4 (for the last two groups) compared to women from countries bordering Switzerland (reference population). Women from other European countries and North America also experience higher risks of being unemployed or homemakers compared to the reference population. The origin also impacts overeducation. Immigrant women from other European countries and Latin America double the risk of being overeducated, in comparison with the group of reference. However, immigrant women from North America have a lower risk of being overeducated than women from surrounding countries. Our third hypothesis is therefore verified. The origin plays a significant role in both overeducation (de-qualification) and de-emancipation.

These results may be linked to discriminatory practices in the Swiss labor market, as one-half of immigrant women from Latin America and Western Africa reported having experienced situations of prejudice or discrimination in Switzerland in the last 24 months before the survey. As already underlined, several studies have shown hiring discriminations according to the migratory background or ethnicity (Fibbi et al. 2014, Fibbi et al. 2006, Wood et al. 2009, Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004, Oreopoulos 2009). Therefore, discriminated immigrants may turn to low-skill jobs in order to find an occupation, or they might drop out of the labor market.

*Table 5 : Results of multinomial models. Determinants of de-qualification and de-emancipation, odds ratios, women*

	<b>Model 1</b>		<b>Model 2</b>	
	<b>(O)</b>	<b>(E)</b>	<b>(O)</b>	<b>(E)</b>
24-32 years old (ref)				
33-41 years old	1.011 (0.410)	1.143 (0.513)	0.902 (0.300)	1.046 (0.392)
42 years old or more	1.175 (0.615)	1.506 (0.836)	1.001 (0.430)	1.277 (0.562)
Bachelor's or equivalent (ref)				
Master's or equivalent	1.042 (0.316)	0.690 (0.202)	1.047 (0.314)	0.642 (0.179)
PhD or equivalent	0.848 (0.373)	0.338* (0.158)	0.875 (0.391)	0.341* (0.146)
Lemanic Region (ref)				
Mittelland	2.275* (0.951)	1.440 (0.617)	2.314* (0.951)	1.807 (0.765)
North-West Switzerland	0.731 (0.345)	0.702 (0.355)	0.732 (0.345)	0.739 (0.356)
Zürich	0.581 (0.241)	0.884 (0.355)	0.583 (0.241)	0.956 (0.355)
East Switzerland	1.134 (0.739)	0.792 (0.597)	1.151 (0.740)	0.887 (0.677)
Central Switzerland	0.573 (0.390)	1.192 (0.912)	0.577 (0.385)	1.297 (0.872)
Ticino	1.082 (0.556)	0.732 (0.435)	1.108 (0.572)	0.778 (0.487)
Economic migration (ref)				
Family migration with arrival at the same time as partner	0.839 (0.517)	1.884 (0.868)	0.981 (0.575)	4.323*** (1.791)
Family migration with arrival after partner	1.189 (0.478)	2.750** (1.024)	1.315 (0.517)	5.165*** (1.911)
Family migration to join the partner who lives in Switzerland	1.388 (0.570)	1.672 (0.709)	1.509 (0.617)	2.991** (1.270)
Other reason	1.271 (0.545)	1.916 (0.761)	1.357 (0.523)	2.918** (1.122)
No children (ref)				
Children only before migrating	1.627 (0.671)	3.521*** (1.230)	1.638 (0.672)	4.110*** (1.419)
Children only after migrating	1.026 (0.398)	8.138*** (2.950)	1.065 (0.405)	8.267*** (2.943)
Children before and after migrating or during migration	0.419 (0.298)	4.090* (2.380)	0.418 (0.299)	3.789* (2.083)

Having a partner: no (reference)				
Having a partner: yes	0.987 (0.372)	1.771 (0.915)	1.001 (0.375)	1.837 (0.854)
Countries bordering Switzerland (reference)				
Other European countries	2.339** (0.693)	2.446** (0.795)	2.348** (0.700)	2.333** (0.737)
North America	0.420* (0.168)	3.616*** (1.266)	0.402* (0.160)	3.123*** (0.991)
Western Africa	2.744 (1.882)	5.847** (3.879)	2.860 (1.860)	7.037*** (3.970)
Latin America	2.303* (0.822)	4.245*** (1.550)	2.376* (0.856)	5.041*** (1.814)
Asia	0.930 (0.421)	4.206*** (1.362)	0.935 (0.422)	4.220*** (1.303)
Residence in CH: 1 year or less (reference)				
Residence in CH: between 2 and 4 years	0.998 (0.342)	0.563 (0.185)	0.993 (0.339)	0.574 (0.186)
Residence in CH: 5 years or more	1.063 (0.388)	0.563 (0.204)	1.033 (0.374)	0.553 (0.202)
Speak not (very) well/not at all (reference)				
Speak (somewhat) fluently	0.688 (0.230)	0.947 (0.354)	0.689 (0.226)	0.908 (0.308)
Work experience: 0-5 years (reference)				
Work experience: 6-10 years	1.004 (0.450)	1.259 (0.605)		
Work experience: 11 years or more	0.818 (0.419)	0.942 (0.513)		
Job offer: no (reference)				
Job offer: yes	0.822 (0.254)	0.202*** (0.0665)		
Constant	0.394 (0.245)	0.0963** (0.0850)	0.326 (0.187)	0.0408** * (0.0296)
Observations	1,121	1,121	1,121	1,121
Pseudo R	0.1944	0.1944	0.1713	0.1713

(O) for Overeducation and (E) for Exclusion from the labor market

Reference category: No mismatch (i.e., successful and adequate professional integration).

Exponential coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses.

Significance: \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, and \*\*\* p<0.001

Source: nccr – on the move Migration Mobility Survey, Weighted results.

## 5 Discussion

The underexploitation of skills is not only depicted through overeducation (in other words the fact for highly skilled migrants to work below their skills) but also by being excluded from the labor market (i.e., by being unemployed or a homemaker). Therefore, this study rethinks the issue of overeducation by including another dimension, the absence of labor force participation of women who were active before the migration, which can be considered a brain waste itself. The de-emancipation and de-qualification processes underlined by Riaño (2003) are verified using data provided by the Migration-Mobility Survey. The results enable a description of the mechanisms and the implications of migration for women in professional integration into the Swiss labor market.

The bivariate and multivariate results demonstrate strong differences in skill underutilization according to the context of migration, the interactions between migration and childhood, and the region of origin. Women arriving in Switzerland for non-professional reasons, who have children, and coming from non-European countries are more likely to be excluded from the labor market. Furthermore, they have more risk of being overeducated if they come from Latin America and European countries not surrounding Switzerland.

The results provide precious information about the factors behind skill underutilization. According to our models, women's de-emancipation is mostly caused by the family situation, which confirms Riaño's (2015) findings. Migrating to Switzerland for family reasons after the partner increases the risk of being unemployed or a homemaker. This depicts the complex situation of tied immigrants who have to adapt themselves without prioritizing their professional pathway. Ballarino and Panichella (2018) demonstrated an extra penalty for immigrant women who move after their husband but also for women who join their native husband or those who move with him at the same time. According to their study, this cost may be translated in terms of job quality or employment depending on the host labor market regulation. The effect of family migration is even more pronounced with the presence of children. The region of origin also plays a role in the probability of being excluded from the labor market. These findings may be partially explained by discrimination or by cultural practice or preferences regarding the articulation between family and profession. Traditional values in terms of the distribution of roles among the family can be more noticeable in some cultures compared to others. In their study, Donato et al. (2014) showed the cumulative effect of gender and birthplace on labor activity as well as the importance of their interaction with marital status. However, they also underlined different dynamics depending on the host country under study. Of course, our results can also be explained by other factors not integrated into our models, such as the poor recognition of the foreign diplomas by Swiss employers.

Our two first hypotheses are therefore only partially verified: women who migrate for family reasons and who have children are more likely to quit the labor market but are not necessarily overeducated.

De-qualification does not seem to be influenced by family configuration or patterns. The region of origin is the main factor impacting the likelihood of being overeducated. There is a strong cleavage between southern and northern countries. Western African and Latin American women show the lowest shares of successful professional integration. Furthermore, Latin American women also observe significantly more risk of being overeducated. In contrast, North American immigrant women have a lower probability of being overeducated than the reference group. One can suggest

that being overeducated is strongly linked to origin, which can translate different types of barriers (language, recognition of diplomas, poor transferability of skills, etc.) as well as discrimination. Those women are more affected by their background, and therefore, some of them encounter a triple disadvantage in the host labor market (being a woman, immigrant and from a specific origin) underlined by Raijman and Semyonov (1997).

It is anticipated that the results observed here may decrease with the duration of stay in the host country. According to a study carried out on the Israeli labor market, the effect of ethnicity on labor market integration progressively diminishes (Raijman and Semyonov 1997). However, according to the same study, gender differences persist from a long-term perspective, which might be explained by the fact that men have more employment opportunities in the sense that they can choose from a large range of occupations, whereas women are more likely to perform in narrower job markets. Unfortunately, our data do not allow us to observe labor market integration from a long-term perspective. Since causality cannot be analyzed correctly based on transversal surveys, the paper demonstrates relationships between dimensions, but does not allow to identify the causality. In conclusion, our findings confirm the addition of disadvantages faced by women. Even in a country with a dynamic labor market and a low level of unemployment, immigrant women who join or follow their partner in Switzerland experience downward occupational mobility and disrupted careers. Indeed, the intensification of domestic responsibilities and re-orientation towards care for family is a common issue even when highly educated (Webb 2015). Such issues can be addressed using concrete measures, for instance, by making external childcare facilities more accessible or by preventing discrimination and prejudice practices among employers. Moreover, different types of support at the time of arrival and during integration into the labor market are definitely needed to avoid brain waste, which is a misuse for everyone (see Riaño et al. 2014).

## Annexe

*Annex 1: Explanatory variables used in the multinomial model with absolute number of individuals and proportion for each category*

		No Mismatch		Overeducation		Labor Market Exclusion		Total	
		Number	Prop.	Number	Prop.	Number	Prop.	Number	Prop.
<b>Sociodemographic Factors</b>									
Age	24-32 years old (ref)	175	55.38%	53	16.77%	88	27.85%	316	28.19%
	33-41 years old	274	55.47%	77	15.59%	143	28.95%	494	44.07%
	42 years old or more	159	51.13%	57	18.33%	95	30.55%	311	27.74%
<b>Total</b>								<b>1,121</b>	<b>100%</b>
Level of education	Bachelor or equivalent (ref)	185	46.37%	55	13.78%	159	39.85%	399	35.59%
	Master or equivalent	332	56.75%	111	18.97%	142	24.27%	585	52.19%
	PhD or equivalent	91	66.42%	21	15.33%	25	18.25%	137	12.22%
<b>Total</b>								<b>1,121</b>	<b>100%</b>
Region of residence in CH	Lemanic Region (ref)	186	54.87%	56	16.52%	97	28.61%	339	30.24%
	Mittelland	49	40.83%	31	25.83%	40	33.33%	120	10.70%
	North-West Switzerland	99	55.93%	32	18.08%	46	25.99%	177	15.79%
	Zürich	188	56.63%	43	12.95%	101	30.42%	332	29.62%
	East Switzerland	25	54.35%	9	19.57%	12	26.09%	46	4.10%
	Central Switzerland	36	56.25%	9	14.06%	19	29.69%	64	5.71%
	Ticino	25	58.14%	7	16.28%	11	25.58%	43	3.84%
<b>Total</b>								<b>1,121</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Specific Gender-Related Factors</b>									
Reason for migrating and timeline with partner's migration	Economic migration (ref)	366	73.35%	85	17.03%	48	9.62%	499	44.51%
	Family migration with arrival at the same time as partner's	39	31.20%	12	9.60%	74	59.20%	125	11.15%
	Family migration with arrival after partner's	67	35.45%	27	14.29%	95	50.26%	189	16.86%
	Family migration to join the partner who lives in Switzerland	57	36.08%	34	21.52%	67	42.41%	158	14.09%
	Other reason	79	52.67%	29	19.33%	42	28.00%	150	13.38%
	<b>Total</b>							<b>1,121</b>	<b>100%</b>
Having children and timeline with migration	No children (ref)	381	67.43%	100	17.70%	84	14.87%	565	50.40%
	Children only before migrating	110	41.83%	48	18.25%	105	39.92%	263	23.46%
	Children only after migrating	96	40.85%	33	14.04%	106	45.11%	235	20.96%
	Children before and after migrating or during migration	21	36.21%	6	10.34%	31	53.45%	58	5.17%
<b>Total</b>								<b>1,121</b>	<b>100%</b>
Having a partner	No (ref)	105	70.95%	28	18.92%	15	10.14%	148	13.20%
	Yes	503	51.70%	159	16.34%	311	31.96%	973	86.80%
<b>Total</b>								<b>1,121</b>	<b>100%</b>

Migration Related Factors									
Region of country of origin	Countries bordering Switzerland (ref)	257	70.41%	67	18.36%	41	11.23%	365	32.56%
	Countries from other Europe	136	52.92%	55	21.40%	66	25.68%	257	22.93%
	Northern America	96	56.47%	12	7.06%	62	36.47%	170	15.17%
	Western Africa	10	22.73%	10	22.73%	24	54.55%	44	3.93%
	Latin America	43	36.75%	28	23.93%	46	39.32%	117	10.44%
	Asia	66	39.29%	15	8.93%	87	51.79%	168	14.99%
	<b>Total</b>							<b>1,121</b>	<b>100%</b>
Integration Factors									
Length of residency in CH	1 year or less (ref)	128	51.82%	33	13.36%	86	34.82%	247	22.03%
	Between 2 and 4 years	220	53.53%	74	18.00%	117	28.47%	411	36.66%
	5 years or more	260	56.16%	80	17.28%	123	26.57%	463	41.30%
	<b>Total</b>							<b>1,121</b>	<b>100%</b>
Speaking local language	Speak not (very) well/not at all (ref)	343	52.53%	99	15.16%	211	32.31%	653	58.25%
	Speak (somewhat) fluently	265	56.62%	88	18.80%	115	24.57%	468	41.75%
	<b>Total</b>							<b>1,121</b>	<b>100%</b>
Work-Related Factors									
Length of work experience	0-5 years (ref)	86	45.03%	30	15.71%	75	39.27%	191	17.04%
	6-10 years	153	53.50%	47	16.43%	86	30.07%	286	25.51%
	11 years or more	369	57.30%	110	17.08%	165	25.62%	644	57.45%
	<b>Total</b>							<b>1,121</b>	<b>100%</b>
Having a job offer before migration	No (ref)	222	36.16%	102	16.61%	290	47.23%	614	54.77%
	Yes	386	76.13%	85	16.77%	36	7.10%	507	45.23%
	<b>Total</b>							<b>1,121</b>	<b>100%</b>



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